The background of the entire cover is a close-up, slightly angled view of the American flag. The stars are visible in the upper left, and the stripes run diagonally across the frame. The text is superimposed on this background.

STATE SONGS OF THE UNITED STATES

An
Annotated Anthology

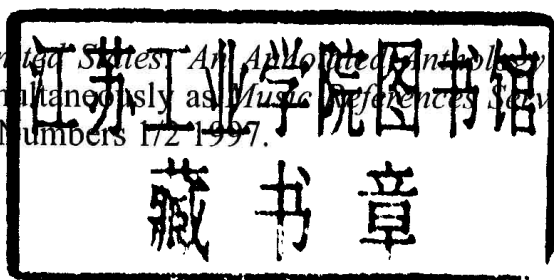
*William E. Studwell
Bruce R. Schueneman*

State Songs of the United States: An Annotated Anthology

Compiled by
William E. Studwell
and Bruce R. Schueneman

Songs assembled and revised by Bruce R. Schueneman

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Preface

All but four states of the United States (Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia) have one or more official state songs. In addition, some states have songs which are closely associated with them yet are not official representatives of the jurisdictions. This volume combines both official and non-official state songs into one convenient volume. All 50 states are represented in some way, sometimes by one song, and sometimes by two or three. The selection criteria included availability, quality, familiarity, and the obvious necessity to cover all the states.

If permission to publish a song was obtained, or if a song is in public domain, the text of the song, words and music, is published (sometimes with a new arrangement) and with an historical annotation. Of the 69 songs included in this anthology, 48 have both the song text and an historical note. The remaining 21 songs, for which permission to publish the text could not be obtained, are covered only by historical data. When entire song texts are presented, the historical note includes all verses; the text (words and music) contains only one verse, almost always the first. Although it would of course have been preferable to publish the texts for all involved songs, the compilers feel that since there is a real need for a scholarly and well-arranged collection of state songs, a somewhat incomplete anthology is better than a non-existent one.

A fair proportion of the songs reproduced or mentioned in this volume are also known in other contexts than that of a state song and/or are well known for one reason or another. These include "The Arkansas Traveler," "Beautiful Ohio," "California, Here I Come," "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," "The Eyes of Texas,"

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"Georgia on My Mind," "Home on the Range," "Indiana," "Iowa Corn Song," "Maryland! My Maryland," "Missouri Waltz," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Folks at Home," "Oklahoma," "On the Banks of the Wabash," "On, Wisconsin," "The Sidewalks of New York," "Tennessee Waltz," and "Yankee Doodle." The majority of the songs, however, are not well known and are seldom published. That is the primary reason for this volume.

The state songs of the United States are a mixed lot. For the most part they represent popular music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some are well-known songs that happen to mention the name of a state (the two Stephen Foster songs, for example), others are the result of contests specifically designed to solicit an official state song (and therefore tend to be highly patriotic), others derive from Broadway ("Oklahoma!") or recent popular music ("Georgia on My Mind"), still others are sentimental ballads reflecting a love of home. Some songs have a reverent hymn-like quality (and many mention God), while others are folk songs (such as "The Arkansas Traveler").

The songs mirror American attitudes about the numerous places Americans call home. Most songs are rural in the sense that the natural physical characteristics are described; cities are only rarely mentioned. History is not forgotten either. While this is usually expressed in vague terms, in several instances the entire song concerns an historic event. Both "Maryland, My Maryland" and "Carolina" were born in the Civil War and cannot be understood outside the context of Civil War times. References to "Northern scum" and "huns" make these songs even more historical period pieces than is usually the case with state songs.

Racial attitudes of the period are also evident in many lyrics. Today these lyrics are offensive to most Americans as are the attitudes they express. The editors have changed the lyrics in several places: the "darkies" of the Stephen Foster songs has been changed to "dear ones" or "people" and the language has been cast in standard English. The original lyrics of "The Yellow Rose of Texas" assume the persona of a "darkey" and describe the charms of the "yellow rose of color." Northern songs are not immune from this problem. "My Michigan" also contains the word "darkies" in

describing the maidens of Alabama. The “dusky” maidens of Idaho are also deemed inferior to the Michigan (presumably light-skinned) variety. The states themselves have sometimes recognized this problem. Florida officially changed the lyrics of Foster’s “Old Folks at Home” in the late 1970s.

The most problematic song in this regard is “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny.” In January 1997 Virginia, after a long legislative battle, repudiated its long time state song. (The original title, “Carry Me Back to Old Virginny,” was amended to “Carry Me Back to Old Virginia” when the state adopted the song in 1940.) One suggestion was to clean up the song by making several word changes. The song depicts an ex-slave (in 1878) thinking fondly of old Virginia and his old massa. The suggested word changes made it appear that the song is not a slave’s longing for the old slavery days but a sentimental general nostalgia for old Virginia (the time period left vague). This suggestion was voted down by the Virginia legislature. The song’s repudiation was not complete, however, and “Carry Me Back to Old Virginia” is now styled the state song emeritus, an interesting and novel category. Only time will tell if Virginia’s solution is followed by other states. It is perhaps ironic that the words from one of the few state songs by an African American lyricist are now considered too racist to use as a state song.

Another interesting example of racial attitudes in state songs is “Missouri Waltz.” The original 1914 lyrics used the words “pickaninnies” and “mammy.” In a later 1945 printing (that is identical except for the word changes and the cover of the sheet music which identifies it as the official state song) these words are replaced by “old folks” and “Mommy.” These word changes, like the ones contemplated for “Carry Me Back to Old Virginia,” change the entire context of the song. Instead of a black mammy singing a baby to sleep and dreaming of Dixieland, the persona becomes white, or at least of indeterminate race. The longing for Dixie, though, remains intact.

These songs also mirror their times in regard to the treatment of women. In the Michigan song mentioned above, the lyricist compares varieties of women as if they were bottles of wine and discovers (no surprise here!) that Michigan women are best. Other

songs also speak of women in the same terms as the natural world, almost as if women were inanimate physical things like mountains or lakes.

Despite their faults and historical datedness, these songs represent a fascinating portrait of America. These songs can be enjoyed for themselves, and several are gems of American popular music. Jingoistic, passionate, and sentimental by turns, they represent what Americans thought—and still think—of themselves. In that light they are also important historical documents.

William E. Studwell
Bruce R. Schueneman

State Songs of the United States: An Annotated Anthology

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A Tribute to American Song

State Songs of the United States is the first of three volumes of similar style and intent. All three volumes will present texts of and basic historical information on compositions which are collectively significant elements in American culture, even if individually they may not be well-known or widely-used. All represent musical lacunae or cultural backwaters which have not received a lot of attention from either historians or anthologists. Yet all three bodies of song are to some degree familiar to many Americans in the course of their year in and year out living, working, and recreating. They are not everyday songs like national anthems, hymns, popular songs, television themes and advertising jingles, and childrens' ditties such as "Happy Birthday to You," yet at the same time they are not esoteric or far removed from the cultural mainstream.

In the present volume of state songs, the reader will find some compositions which are very familiar, some which are fairly familiar, and some which are quite obscure. In at least a few cases, the state song may not be even well-known in its particular jurisdiction. A somewhat opposite scenario is associated with the second expected annotated Americana anthology, *College Fight Songs*. Most persons who are students or staff on the campuses of American universities and colleges and who participate in or attend campus sporting events and various other local occasions are familiar with at least one of the school's fight songs. There are probably few institutions of higher learning in the United States that do not have some type of fight or sports song to cheer on the athletic teams and to generally promote the organization. However, most college fight songs are rarely heard outside the campus of their origins and the

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stadiums and arenas athletic teams visit in the course of intercollegiate competition.

The third expected anthology, *Circus Songs*, has yet another type of scenario. With some exceptions, songs specifically written for the circus or widely adopted by circus musicians are only performed when “the greatest show on earth” and similar popular gaudy and exciting events are taking place. Carnivals, fancily decorated carousels, exhibitions of weird and bizarre phenomena, girlie shows, and other occasions on the titillating fringe of society are also frequent dispensers of circus-style musical compositions.

These three anthologies, one relating to American government, one relating to American higher education, and one relating to popular amusements, though collectively dealing with a sizeable portion of American life, only cover a relatively small amount of the huge body of American and foreign music which has soothed, comforted, amused, excited, and inspired Americans for centuries. Americans have made notable contributions in many areas of music, including “classical” or “serious music,” but what American composers and performers have excelled in most is the creation of a huge amount of shorter pieces we call songs. Whether the song is patriotic, romantic, religious, humorous, calm, stimulating, fast, slow, in older modes like the waltz, or in the newer modes of jazz or rock and roll (both American innovations), or whether the song was from Tin Pan Alley or Broadway in New York, or the rural areas of the South or the West, or from black clubs of New Orleans, or someplace else, Americans have produced an almost countless number of good and/or successful songs in the past two centuries or so. Largely because of jazz and rock and roll, American songs, like so many other artistic, technological, intellectual, or commercial products from the United States, have become an influential and widespread cultural force in the twentieth century.

As an adjunct to this song anthology and the two other expected Americana collections, it seems appropriate to present an appreciation for the long term wealth of American song. Therefore, 221 noteworthy American songs are listed chronologically below. Why 221? Well, it has been 221 years since the Declaration of Independence was signed, and accordingly the upcoming list could be regarded as sort of a declaration of some of the musical achievements

of the United States. The list is of course very subjective. It includes a number of obvious choices as well as a number of more debatable selections. Most of the songs are totally American, some are partially American, and some are suspected to be American. When the lyrics and melodies are known to have been created at different times, the song is listed under the first of the dates. When the song is a mix of American and foreign elements, the piece is listed under the date of the American component.

Altogether, the list is intended to at least partially mirror the changing American cultural scene up to the early 1970s. Therefore, the reader will find a broad spectrum of classics, interesting compositions, and old favorites presented. Of course, a large number of good songs will not be on the list since there are literally thousands to select from. Variety is the key. Since all the songs listed have to have endured for at least one generation past their creation or popularization, the early 1970s are a necessary cutoff time. Although the list covers over two centuries of varied musical endeavor, it should be noted that both the chronologically first and chronologically last, "The Girl I Left Behind Me" and "Jesus Christ, Superstar," reflect the age old themes of romance and religion. Things are always changing, yet tend to repeatedly cover similar ground over and over again.

Finally, here is the main point of this essay, the listing of the 221 honored songs:

TO 1860

"The Girl I Left Behind Me" (wm. anonymous, 1760s)

"Yankee Doodle" (wm. anonymous, probably Francis Hopkinson, 1760s?)

"Hail to the Chief" (w. Scotsman Walter Scott, 1810, m. anonymous, 1812)

"The Star-Spangled Banner" (w. Francis Scott Key, 1814, m. anonymous English, around 1779)

"Home Sweet Home" (w. John Howard Payne, m. Englishman Henry Rowley Bishop, 1823)

“Amazing Grace” (w. Englishman John Newton, 1779, m. anonymous, 1831)

“America” (“My Country ’Tis of Thee”) (w. Samuel Francis Smith, 1832, m. anonymous English, 1744)

“Turkey in the Straw” (w. anonymous, 1861, m. anonymous, 1834)

“She Wore a Yellow Ribbon” (wm. anonymous, 1838)

“Joy to the World” (w. Englishman Isaac Watts, 1719, m. Lowell Mason, 1839)

“Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean (wm. anonymous, 1843)

“Buffalo Gals” (wm. Cool White, 1844)

“Oh, Susanna” (wm. Stephen Foster, 1847)

“Camptown Races” (wm. Stephen Foster, 1850)

“Old Folks at Home” (“Swanee River”) (wm. Stephen Foster, 1851)

“My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night!” (wm. Stephen Foster, 1853)

“Listen to the Mocking Bird” (wm. Septimus Winner, 1855)

“Nearer, My God to Thee” (w. Englishwoman Sarah F. Adams, 1841, m. Lowell Mason, 1856)

“Jingle Bells” (wm. James S. Pierpont, 1857)

“We Three Kings of Orient Are” (wm. John Henry Hopkins, 1857)

“Far Above Cayuga’s Waters” (w. Archibald W. Weeks, Wilmot M. Smith, 1872, m. H. S. Thompson, 1858)

“Yellow Rose of Texas” (wm. anonymous, 1858)

“Dixie” (wm. Daniel Decatur Emmett, 1859)

“Simple Gifts” (m. anonymous, probably before 1860)

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” (wm. anonymous, probably before 1860)